Editorial

Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing (2009) **17**, 1–2. doi:10.1057/jt.2009.2

This issue contains a Call for Papers for an issue of the journal in 2009 on the subject of social media measurement in marketing. As marketing budgets fall under greater scrutiny during the present economic downturn, digital marketing tools ranging from email to affiliate and search marketing become attractive because of their perceived greater effectiveness. Indeed, internet marketing appears to be the only form of marketing expenditure forecast to increase in 2009 in the United Kingdom.¹

The business case and the implications of this trend would seem to be inescapable for the evolving marketing and promotional mix. Special issues of our sister publications have waxed lyrical on the potential of such marketing tools. But much less clear are the prospects for the so-called second generation digital marketing tools – ranging from electronic word-of-mouth, to viral marketing, blogs, discussion fora, and to crowdsourcing and virtual worlds. Some firms have spent time during the last 2 years experimenting with such media, with mixed results. For example, 60 leading consumer and Internet brands participated in the launch of a new advertising system on the global social networking site Facebook in 2007.² But there is little evidence about how such a presence might work, how consumers will relate to these brands in this context, or even if they work at all in increasing brand awareness and stimulating sales revenues.

More recently, UK catalogue retailer Argos launched a Giant Jar viral campaign to highlight their range of 18 000 products and drive awareness of the brand among prospective customers. A giant glass jar was commissioned and a film made that showed the filling of the jar with Argos product.³ Users were encouraged to guess the number of Argos products involved. The person with the closest guess won all the items in

the jar (or £10 000). The site received 479 000 impressions in 9 weeks as people told their friends and 100 000 people entered the competition. Well and good. But how did Argos know whether the £130 000 promotion paid off? Of course, entrants' contact details were captured and, because of the nature of the Argos buying process, could be identified at the point of sale. This tracking permitted the firm to establish that new customers generated by the competition spent £700 000 at Argos during the promotional period. Argos has an unusual business model which facilitates this kind of tracking. For others, managing the complex data flows from the emerging streams is difficult, and – for all – the behavioural mechanisms involved are still poorly understood. Marketers may not be wholly in control of communications with customers over products and services within an e-business or multi-channel environment. There are often informal interactions between marketers, third parties and customers as well as among customers themselves, which may be incapable of being measured effectively. Yet group social behaviours are seen as the most significant behavioural phenomenon to have arisen from the growth of e-business technologies. Indeed, we are the point where many of these behaviours have reached a sufficiently large critical mass to be important in influencing the behaviour of e-businesses and possibly even of societies. Finally, integrating the kinds of social marketing measures which do emerge with more traditional targeting, measurement and analysis techniques is challenging. The Call for Papers spells out those areas that we think will be of particular interest to our readers.

Despite this proposal to explore new and emerging issues in social marketing measurement,

this regular issue demonstrates that there is no lack of interest in arguably more conventional themes. Indeed, the six papers in this regular issue of the journal run the gamut of marketing measurement topics: from gauging the attitudes of consumers towards the counterfeiting of luxury brands, to the segmentation of green consumer attitudes in Portugal, from assessing the importance of service quality in retaining mobile telephone customers to the changing factors affecting the development and nature of relational exchange between different sizes of firms. And from understanding the way in which consumers' lower than expected memorability of TV advertising is linked to a degree of media overexposure, to issues around the communications of product-harm crises.

Finally, this issue contains the first in a series of short articles entitled *A Closer Look*. We plan to include a regular feature designed to provide an update or briefing for practitioners on sometimes

small, sometimes overlooked, but always important, aspects of targeting, measurement and analysis. The first few of these are by Dr Bruce Ratner. Bruce is active in the US direct marketing industry, both as a frequent lecturer at Direct Marketing Association (DMA) conferences and as an instructor of the Advanced Statistics course sponsored by the DMA. He is also author of *Statistical Modelling and Analysis for Database Marketing*.

REFERENCES AND NOTE

- 1 Anon (2008) Barclays ad forecast: Bullish on online search, Bearish on newspapers. *Seeking Alpha*, <http://seekingalpha.com/article/111461-barclays-ad-forecast-bullish-on-online-search-bearish-on-newspapers>, accessed 18 December.
- 2 Press Release. (2007) Facebook Unveils Facebook Ads <http://www.facebook.com/press/releases.php?p=9176>, accessed 6 November.
- 3 The film can still be seen at <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=cQR28z27gqA> and the Giant Jar is now for sale at <http://www.giantjar.co.uk/>.

Jonathan Reynolds